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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The Secretary-General continues to believe that the mandate of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific remains valid, and that the Centre could be a useful instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The regional dialogue initiated by the Centre, in 1989, through the organization of disarmament meetings in Asia and the Pacific, has come to be known as the "Kathmandu process". As evident from General Assembly resolutions, the process has received wide support from Member States and academic groups within the region as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security-related issues relevant to the region and exploring region-oriented solutions.

During the reporting period from August 1999 to July 2000, the Centre continued to promote disarmament and security through the following disarmament meetings it organized: (a) a meeting on the theme "Security concepts in a changing world" held at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 3 to 5 August 1999; (b) a meeting on the theme "Strategic stability, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" held at Kathmandu, Nepal, from 15 to 17 February 2000; (c) a seminar on the theme "Illicit trafficking in small arms" held at Jakarta, Indonesia, from 3 to 4 May 2000; and (d) two United Nations-sponsored expert group meetings on the

* A/55/150.

** The present report covers the activities of the Regional Centre for the period from August 1999 to July 2000.

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establish.. ent of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, held at Sapporo, Japan, from 5 to 8 October 1999 and from 2 to 5 April 2000, respectively.

Pursuant to the request by the General Assembly contained in its resolutions 52/38 S of 9 December 1997 and 53/77 A of 4 December 1998, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, through the Regional Centre, has continued to extend technical and substantive assistance to the five Central Asian States in the drafting of a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia by organizing a series of United Nations-sponsored expert group meetings. During the reporting period, the Group met twice at Sapporo, Japan (5 to 8 October 1999 and 2 to 5 April 2000 respectively), and has made substantive progress in negotiating the text of the draft treaty, enlarging the area of agreement.

Consultations on the relocation of the Centre held with the host country, Member States concerned and interested organizations were inconclusive and owing to the lack of sufficient extrabudgetary resources to finance the physical establishment and operations of the Centre at Kathmandu, the Director continues for the time being to operate from United Nations Headquarters in New York.

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I. Introduction

1. On 1 December 1999, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/55 C on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of which read as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
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> "...
>
> "5. *Requests* the Secretary-General, taking note of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 49/76 D of 15 December 1994, to provide the Regional Centre with all necessary support, within existing resources, in carrying out its programme of activities;
>
> "6. *Invites* the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with the Government of the Kingdom of Nepal as well as with other Member States concerned and interested organizations to assess the possibility of enabling the Centre to operate effectively from Kathmandu;
>
> "7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. It is also submitted pursuant to resolution 54/55 E of 1 December 1999 on the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, by which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support, within existing resources, to the regional centres in carrying out their programmes of activities and to report to it at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report covers the period from August 1999 to July 2000.

II. Activities of the Centre from August 1999 to July 2000

3. The Secretary-General continues to believe that the mandate of the Regional Centre remains valid and that the Centre could be a useful instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region. Consultations carried out by the Director of the Centre with Member States and academic institutes within and outside the region, as well as meetings organized by the Centre, have confirmed the strong support for the Centre's role in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building and the promotion of disarmament and security. In this connection, the value of the regional meetings organized by the Centre has been highly commended by the General Assembly and the Asian and Pacific community.

4. In line with this approach and within the limited financial resources available during the reporting period, the Centre organized the following meetings: two regional disarmament meetings, held respectively in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and Kathmandu, Nepal; two United Nations-sponsored expert group meetings on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, held in Sapporo, Japan; a seminar on the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, and several informal meetings on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, held in Geneva and New York (see A/55/166).

5. The regional disarmament meeting on "Security concepts in a changing world", was held in Ulaanbaatar, from 3 to 5 August 1999. The meeting, organized in close cooperation with the Government of Mongolia, was attended by 40 participants representing Governments, research institutes, the mass media and non-governmental organizations. As post-cold war perceptions of security are changing, given that the nature of the threats has expanded beyond traditional military threats to include environmental challenges, transnational crime and other concerns, the meeting focused on security concepts and the security environment in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting also addressed Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/77 D of 4 December 1998.

6. The regional dialogue promoted by the Centre through the organization of annual meetings in the Asian and Pacific region and other means has come to be known as the "Kathmandu process", as reflected in General Assembly resolutions. The continuation of this process as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security issues and exploring region-oriented solutions has gained the strong support of Member States and academic groups within the region. Strong support has also been expressed for the establishment

of a network, linking the Centre and its interlocutors within the region, as a way of exchanging data and information related to disarmament and security. The Secretary-General intends to effectively use the Regional Centre as a useful instrument to provide a valuable forum for discussions on regional confidence and security-building measures, and he is gratified with the continued political and financial support given to it in the region.

7. It should be noted that, in recognition of the importance of the "Kathmandu process", the Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) (www.cscap.org), an organization of academic and research institutes in Asia and the Pacific, amended its charter in 1996 so as to grant observer status to the Centre, the first observer admitted. Since then, the Centre and CSCAP have been jointly addressing disarmament and security concerns within the region. The Centre intends to explore opportunities for further cooperation with existing regional organizations and other academic institutes within the Asia-Pacific region.

8. The second meeting organized by the Centre was the twelfth regional disarmament meeting in Asia and the Pacific, on the theme "Strategic stability, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 15 to 17 February 2000. Some 30 participants representing Governments, research institutes and non-governmental organizations mainly within the region, attended the meeting.

9. The Kathmandu meeting focused on nuclear disarmament and the elaboration of measures and strategies towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The meeting also dealt with the following issues: missile proliferation; prevention of an arms race in outer space; Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status; and preparation for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

10. As in the past, the proceedings of the above-mentioned meetings will be published by the Centre.

11. Pursuant to the request by the General Assembly contained in its resolutions 52/38 S and 53/77 A, the Centre continued to assist the five Central Asian States in the drafting of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The Centre organized the fourth United Nations-sponsored expert group meeting in Sapporo, Japan, from 5 to 8 October 1999. Experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan attended the meeting. At that meeting, the experts were able to negotiate many issues and accept agreed formulations of the treaty text dealing with a number of hitherto unresolved issues.

12. From 2 to 5 April 2000, the Centre organized the fifth United Nations-sponsored expert group meeting in Sapporo with a view to concluding the drafting exercise. Experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the meeting. The experts focused their efforts on resolving outstanding issues. The Director of the Centre chaired both meetings and provided technical and substantive assistance to the expert group. The Director also organized several informal meetings in New York to assist the five Central Asian States in preparing for the Sapporo meetings and to consider their future course of action. The Secretary-General earnestly hopes for the early conclusion of the treaty in accordance with the expressed wishes of the Central Asian States and, for that purpose, continues to provide the expert group with assistance for the early realization of the joint initiative of the five Central Asian States through the Centre.

13. The Centre, together with the Government of Indonesia and in cooperation with the Government of Japan, organized the Jakarta regional seminar on the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, on 3 and 4 May 2000. The seminar was also organized with the assistance of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Participants from 10 States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and observers from China, India, Japan, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, the ASEAN secretariat and the European Union attended the seminar. As the first meeting ever held by the Centre in South-East Asia, the Jakarta seminar was extremely useful in identifying common concerns related to the problems arising from the trafficking in small arms. Similarly, the Jakarta seminar was able to meet the objectives called for by General Assembly resolution 54/54 R on the illicit traffic in small arms, particularly in encouraging Member States to promote regional and subregional initiatives in addressing the trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The Director of the Centre attended the Jakarta seminar and delivered the opening and concluding remarks.

14. As a means of promoting cooperation between the Centre and its constituents, the Centre provided the United Nations Association of Japan with technical and substantive services for its organization of the sixth Kanazawa Symposium on North-East Asia, on the theme "Further promotion of the Kanazawa process into the twenty-first century", which was held from 7 to 10 June 2000. The Director of the Centre attended the symposium and chaired some sessions.

III. Staffing and financing

15. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/39 D, the Centre was established "on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions that Member States and interested organizations [might] make to that end". In paragraph 6 of its resolution 54/55 C, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with the Government of the Kingdom of Nepal as well as with other Member States concerned and interested organizations to assess the possibility of enabling the Centre to operate effectively from Kathmandu. Consultations held with the host country with a view to securing reliable resources for maintaining the Centre in Kathmandu were inconclusive. Consultations with other Member States and interested organizations in this regard have indicated that, while there was strong support for the activities of the Centre, there was a mixed reaction to the relocation of the Centre to Kathmandu at this stage. Although the logic of locating the Centre in Kathmandu was acknowledged, many were concerned about an assured supply of extrabudgetary resources to maintain the Centre effectively in Kathmandu and therefore considered the present arrangement of locating the Centre in New York as a temporary measure unavoidable. Consultations with the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kathmandu have indicated that a significant amount of resources will be required annually for the establishment and operation of the Regional Centre at Kathmandu. In view of this fact and considering that all contributions now received are earmarked for the substantive activities of the Centre, it will not be possible to establish the Centre physically at Kathmandu with the current resource situation. The Department for Disarmament Affairs will continue to hold consultations on this subject and the Director will continue to operate temporarily from United Nations Headquarters in New York until reliable means can be found to finance the entire cost of the Centre's operation at Kathmandu. In the meantime, UNDP and the United Nations Information Office at Kathmandu have continued to provide the Centre with logistical support for the meetings held there.

16. During the reporting period from August 1999 to July 2000, voluntary contributions in the amount of $28,000 were received. In addition, a number of Governments and organizations contributed to the work of the Centre by hosting conferences and absorbing a major portion of the costs. In this respect, the Secretary-General wishes to express his appreciation to: the Government of Mongolia for the 1999 Ulaanbaatar meeting; Rissho Kosei-Kai, a Japanese non-governmental organization, for the costs of the February 2000 Kathmandu meeting; the Hokkaido Prefecture and Sapporo City in Japan for the October 1999 and April 2000 United Nations-sponsored expert group meetings on a Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone; and the Government of Indonesia for the May 2000 Jakarta seminar. The Secretary-General also wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Thailand for their contributions, and to the Government of Nepal for its overall support for the Centre. While appreciating the substantive contributions received, the Secretary-General appeals to Member States and other interested organizations to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Centre in order to ensure its viability and enhance its effective functioning, including the continuation of the "Kathmandu process". The status of the Trust Fund for the Centre covering the biennium 1998-1999 appears in the annex to the present report.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific covering the biennium 1998-1999

(United States dollars)

I.	Fund balance, 31 December 1997	351 279
II.	Income, 1 January 1998-31 December 1999	
	Voluntary contributions	70 686
	Interest income	32 813
	Miscellaneous income	567
	Subtotal	**104 066**
III.	Expenditures	
	1 January 1998-31 December 1999	137 290
	Prior period adjustments	(2 485)
	Subtotal	**134 805**
IV.	Fund balance, 31 December 1999	320 540

Note. This information is based on the financial statement for the period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999. During the period from 1 January to 30 June 2000, additional contributions totalling $28,000 were received from New Zealand ($10,000), the Republic of Korea ($15,000) and Thailand ($3,000).